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How to Identify Spanish Names.
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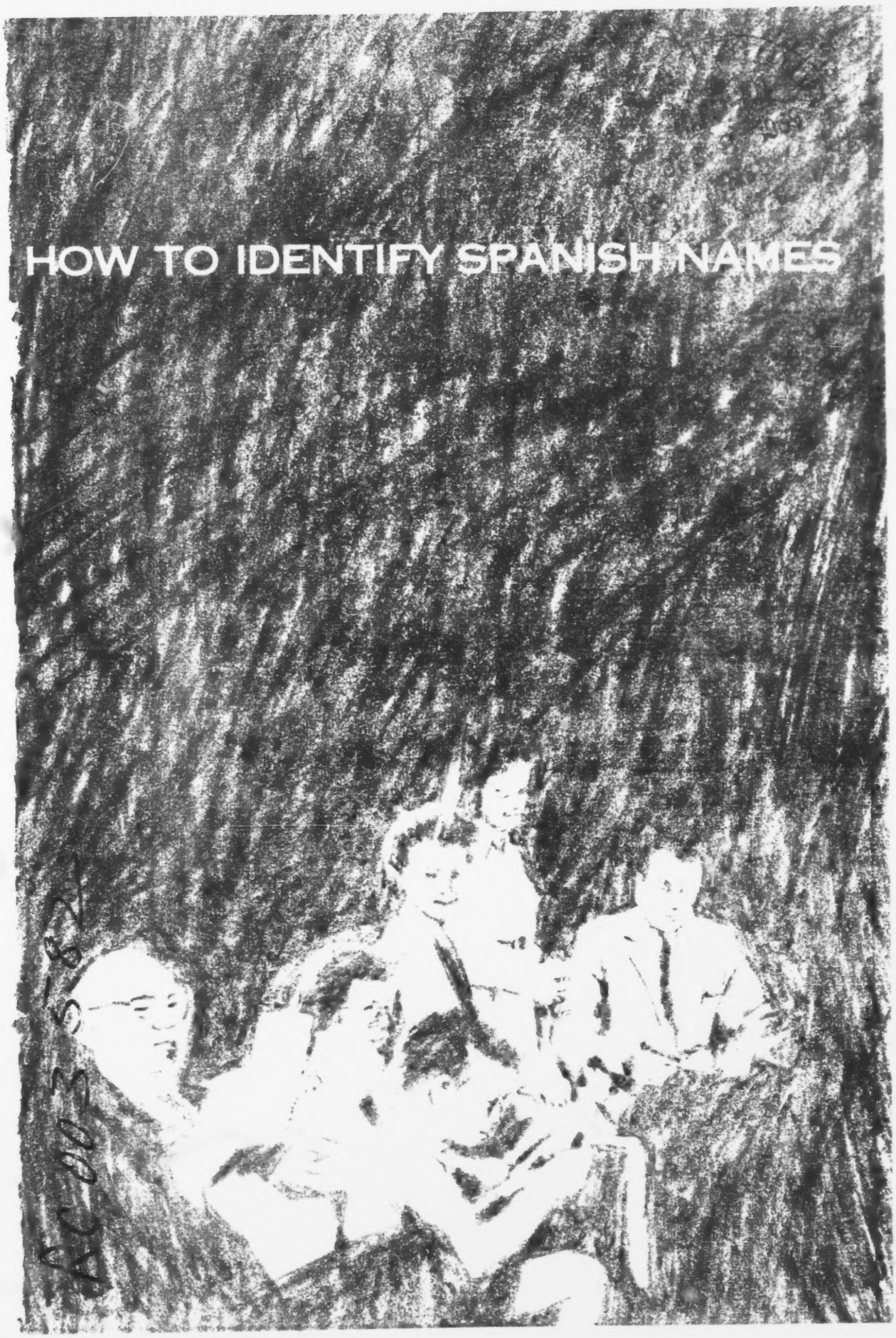
Problems associated with identifying names among Spanish-speaking people and addressing them are discussed. Their customs regarding names and differences which exist in Puerto Rican and Spanish cultures are included. Variations and compound names are treated. Suggestions are given for recording names of Spanish-speaking persons to facilitate correct registering by public agencies. Questions and forms helpful in determining names and their Spanish translations are included. (CM)

HOW TO IDENTIFY SPANISH NAMES



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A man's name is his most important possession. It is not merely a way to identify him. It is his identity. It is also his dignity.

Different cultures maintain different forms for naming their members. In each culture, the form is significant and is not merely a capricious designation.

In the United States, persons are usually called by their first and last names - - by their given as well as their "Christian", or family name. In the Spanish culture a person can take several names to demonstrate identification with various families, that of his mother as well as of his father. It is the Spanish custom to maintain the father's name next to the last in a series of names. Thus Félix Rodríguez Rivera, would in English be called Félix Rodriguez, the latter being the name of his father.

The manner in which Spanish-speaking persons are named reflects much about their culture To help you better understand your Puerto Rican, and other Spanish-speaking neighbors this booklet has been prepared.

Cordialmente,

Joseph Monserrat
Director

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AMONG SPANISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE, it is the custom for a person to use both his father's family name and his mother's family name attached to his given name or names.

Since this custom differs from that in use in North America, difficulty is sometimes experienced here in identifying and in knowing how to address Spanish-speaking persons.

The Spanish custom is outlined below, followed by suggested procedures for the use of government and community agencies in recording the names of persons of Spanish background.

THE CUSTOM REGARDING NAMES AMONG SPANISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE

The essential difference between North American and Spanish usage regarding names is that the Spanish custom is for a person to use both what would be called here his "father's last name" and his "mother's maiden name," in the following order:

given name (or names)	+	father's last name	+	mother's maiden name

Thus, by use of both the father's family name and the mother's family name, the child is identified with the family to which he belongs. However, despite the use of the mother's family name, it is the father's family name which is continued from one generation to the next -- that is, the continuation of names is patrilineal as in North America.

The original intent in naming a child was to denote legitimacy and lineage. However, parents in consensual, or common-law, marriages also tend to follow this practice. Historically, for children born out of wedlock it was the usual practice to register the child with the mother's name only, but this practice has been changed through legislation in several of the Latin-

American countries.

In Puerto Rico, a law approved in recent years states that the names of both parents, even if not legally married, must be recorded on a child's birth certificate if the father acknowledges paternity. Provision is also made in such cases for permitting a child born out of wedlock to use his father's family name if the father agrees.

The following example will illustrate the customary usage of names. In the example, the husband's father's family name (the husband's "last name") is underlined twice and the wife's father's family name (the wife's "maiden name") is underlined once.

1. Mr. (Señor) Pedro Rivera Colón marries Miss (Señorita) Carmen Soto Rodríguez.

2. The wife's name then becomes (depending upon her choice) either:

   Mrs. (Señora) Carmen Soto de Rivera, or

   Mrs. (Señora) Carmen Soto Rivera.

   The latter, of course, could be the same in North American usage.

3. In time, they have four children whom, in order of birth, they name:

   José Rivera Soto

   María Ana Rivera Soto

   María Luisa Rivera Soto

   José Manuel Rivera Soto

4. If the family were to adopt the North American custom of of names, they would become:

Husband: Mr. Pedro Rivera

Wife: Mrs. Carmen Rivera, or Mrs. Carmen S. Rivera, or Mrs. Carmen Soto Rivera (the same as she might have chosen in accordance with the Spanish custom).

(Before marriage she would have been Miss Carmen Soto.)

Children: José Rivera
María Ana Rivera
María Luisa Rivera
José Manuel Rivera

ADDRESSING SPANISH-SPEAKING PERSONS

In addressing persons who use both the father's family name and the mother's family name, it is correct to use either both names or the father's family name alone, but not the mother's family name alone.

With reference to the above family:

1. The husband may be addressed as Mr. Rivera or Mr. Rivera Colón, not as Mr. Colón (his mother's maiden name).

2. Before marriage, the wife may be addressed as Miss Soto or Miss Soto Rodríguez, not as Miss Rodríguez (her mother's maiden name).

   After marriage, she may be addressed as Mrs. Rivera or Mrs. de Rivera. It is correct and becoming customary to omit the

"de" in addressing her even if she uses it in writing her name. (An exception to this occurs when the "de" or other preposition is actually part of her husband's family name: for example, "de Jesús" is a single family name including a preposition. Such names are discussed in the following section.)

3. The children may be addressed as José Rivera or José Rivera Soto, not as José Soto (the mother's maiden name), etc.

In addition to the terms "Señor" (Mister), "Señorita" (Miss), and "Señora" (Mrs.), one often finds in Spanish usage the terms "don" and "doña". These are used as a mark of respect with a persons' given name -- in general, only if one already knows the person. "Don" is used for men, and "doña" for women, either single or married.

The various forms of address may be illustrated by reference to an hypothetical official of Puerto Rico, Roberto Méndez Gálvez, (pronounced Ro-bber-to MEN-dez GAL-vez), and his wife, Carmen Rivera de Méndez.

The official may be referred to as Mr. Méndez; or as Mr. Méndez Gálvez; or as Secretary Méndez Gálvez; or as don Roberto.

His wife may be referred as Mrs. Méndez; or as doña Carmen.

VARIATIONS AND COMPOUND NAMES

Although the customary Spanish pattern of names is given name (s) + father's family name + mother's family name, in that order (with the exception of married women), variations and compound names are often encountered.

1. *Names including prepositions:* In the United States, we are

all familiar with the name "du Pont," which includes the preposition "du" and, translated literally from the French, means "of the bridge."

Similar names are found fairly frequently in Spanish. For example: de Jesús; de la Cruz; de los Santos; del Río; del Valle. The "de" or "del" may be capitalized or not, depending on the preference of the individual.

The "de" in these names should not be confused with the "de" used by Mrs. Carmen Soto de Rivera. In the case of a married woman, the "de" occurs because "Señora de Rivera" means "Wife of Rivera" -- in which case the "de" is not an actual part of the name itself. *

2. *Compound family names:* A compound family name, consisting of two or more words and handed down as a unit from generation to generation, is also found occasionally, Examples include: Porrata Doria; Campos del Toro; García de la Torre; Ramírez de Arellano.

3. *Variations in usage:* Certain variations in usage of names occur throughout the countries of Latin America, as matters of either local custom or individual choice. The following are the most frequent variations:

   In some countries, the father's and mother's family names are usually separated by the conjunction "y" (pronounced "ee") meaning "and." In this case, Mr. Pedro Rivera Colón would be Mr. Pedro Rivera y Colón. (Not common in Puerto Rico.)

* If Mrs. Rivera were to become a widow, she might use the following form: Mrs. Carmen Soto Viuda de Rivera -- "viuda" meaning "widow," and sometimes abbreviated "Vda." This usage is not often encountered in Puerto Rico today.

In some cases, persons have half-adopted the North American custom by using an initial in place of the mother's family name. In this case, our hero would be Mr. Pedro Rivera C. (Not common in Puerto Rico.)

In some cases, persons hyphenate the two family names. Thus: Mr. Pedro Rivera-Colón. (Not very common in Spanish-speaking persons who have moved to the U.S.)

The principal variation occuring in Puerto Rico is that many persons have adopted the North American custom and have dropped the mother's family name in everyday usage --though usually finding it necessary to retain it in legal matters.

RECORDING NAMES OF SPANISH-SPEAKING PERSONS

The following procedures have been adopted by various public agencies in registering the names of Spanish-speaking clients:

1. Ask the client for his complete name. If the client is a woman, ask if she is married. If so, ask for her married name.

2. In recording the name:

   a. In the case of men, single women, and children: A hyphen may be inserted between the two family names. Thus, before, their marriage, the names of our hero and heroine would be recorded as follows:

      Rivera-Colón, Pedro (Mr.)
      Soto-Rodríguez, Carmen (Miss)

   b. In case of married women: The name would be recorded essentially the same as in North American usage:

Rivera, Carmen S. (Mrs.)
Rivera, Carmen Soto (Mrs.)
Rivera, Carmen Soto de (Mrs.)

(When "de" or "del" is actually part of the family name, as in "de la Cruz," the name is usually alphabetized under "D.")

3. If the client is a child, ask for his complete name and inquire as to the father's complete name. Finding out how the child's name appears on his birth certificate may also give clues as to his correct name.

4. Since it is not uncommon for more than one child in a family to share one name, it is important to record all of a person's given names. For instance, in our example, José and José Manuel are brothers, and María Ana and María Luisa are sisters. *

5. Whenever possible, it is preferable to have the client write his name on a piece of paper since this aids in obtaining the correct name and correct spelling.

6. It is important to establish clearly which is the father's family name and to make sure that records are filed under his name and not the mother's family name.

* Clear recording of names is also important since a difference of one letter may sometimes lead to confusion. For example: Julio (boy's name) and Julia (girl's); Juan (boy's) and Juana (girl's). With very few exceptions, given names ending in "o" are masculine and in "a" femenine; this does not apply, however, to family names.

7. In the case of records which must be referred to frequently and in which it is important to locate past files, adequate cross references may be important. The experience of the Migration Division, however, is that cross references are of general importance only in the case of married women, for whom cross references under their maiden names are maintained. If success is achieved in filing records under a person's father's family name, cross references are usually not necessary.*

8. A great many persons of Spanish background who have moved to the U.S. have adopted the North American custom of using only the father's family name. In obtaining and recording a person's name, it should not be assumed because he is of Spanish background that he actually uses his mother's family name. An effort should be made to record his name as he uses it.

9. Cases may be found in which a person is known by different names -- for example, he may have dropped the use of the mother's family name, but the double name may appear on older documents such as Social Securi ty card. In these cases, in addition to recording the name currently used, it may be important to enter on records "Also known as . . ." followed by the other name.

* Although the use of the double name may seem complicated, it does not ordinarily increase the number of records which must be searched to locate other family members bearing the same father's family name. For example, suppose a search must be made of files under the name "Rivera": although some may be simply "Rivera-Colón," some "Rivera-Rodríguez," etc., there would still be the same number of cases if all used only the one name "Rivera."

10. Clients may also sometimes mention relatives other than those inquired about. Don't be surprised if a client tells you he is the grandson or nephew of someone -- it is probably an illustrious member of the family.

OBTAINING NAMES CORRECTLY

The following questions in Spanish may be helpful in determining names correctly:

1. What is your name?
   ¿Cómo se llama usted? (KOH-mo seh YAH-ma ooss-TED)

2. What is your given name?
   ¿Cuál es su nombre de pila? (kwahl ess soo NOHM-breh deh PEE-la)

3. What is your father's family name? (i.e., "your last name")
   ¿Cuál es su apellido paterno? (kwahl ess soo ah-peh-YEE-do pah-TEHR-no)

4. What is your mother's family name? (i.e., "your mother's maiden name")
   ¿Cuál es su apellido materno? (kwahl ess soo ah-peh-YEE-do mah-THER-no)

5. Are you married? (Asked of a woman)
   ¿Está usted casada? (ess-TA oos-TED kah-SAH-da)
   (If asked of a man: "¿Está usted casado?")

6. What is your husband's family name? (i.e., "husband's last name)
   ¿Cuál es el apellido de su esposo? (kwahl ess el ah-peh-YEE-do de soo ess-POH-so)

For Children

7. What is your father's name?
   ¿Cómo se llama su papá? (KOH-mo seh YAH-ma soo pah-PAH)

8. What is your mother's name?
   ¿Cómo se llama su mamá? (KOH-mo seh YAH-ma soo mah-MAH)

"Apellido" is perhaps the most important word in ascertaining names correctly since it specifically means "family name" -- as distinguished from "nombre," which usually understood to mean "given name." Even when interviewing in English you may find "apellido paterno" and "apellido materno" useful to determine family names correctly.

The following forms for having persons write out their names may also be helpful:

Form A: Man, Single Woman, or Child

1. Escriba aquí su nombre exactamente como lo usa:
   (Write your name here exactly as you use it)

   _____

2. Escriba aquí su nombre completo:
   (Write your complete name here)

_____	_____	_____
nombre(s) de pila (given name[s])	apellido paterno (father's family name--i.e., client's last name)	apellido materno (mother's family name--i.e., mother's maiden name)

Form B: Married Woman

1. Escriba aquí su nombre exactament como lo usa:
   (Write your name here exactly as you use it)

   _____

2. Escriba aquí su nombre completo:
   (Write your complete name here)

_____	_____	_____
nombre(s) de pila (given name[s])	apellido paterno (father's family name-- i.e., client's maiden name)	apellido del esposo (husband's family name--i.e., client's married name)

A small percentage of persons do not know how to write, and if a person appears reluctant to write his name, it may be for this reason. He is usually sensitive about this, and unless absolutely necessary, it is generally preferable not to ask him directly whether he is illiterate -- especially in cases where the development of a future relationship with the client is important.

A FINAL WORD

In general, the spelling of Spanish names is much more uniform than names here, but don't be surprised if you find some variations between similar names. For example, Toro, Torre, and Torres are Three different names.

Don't be surprised either if you find Spanish-speaking persons with "un-Spanish" names. Latin-American countries have received many immigrants from abroad, and in Puerto Rico, "Bird" and "O'Neill," for instance, are perfectly good family names.

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